

Union leadership and gender: obstacles for women

by

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Executive Summary

The labor movement holds itself to a high standard regarding diversity in leadership, as stated in the goal, “The leadership should look like the membership.” While unions have taken proactive steps to promote diversity in leadership, there is still a gap. This study examines the experience of male and female union leaders in order to understand some of the differences in the paths to leadership. By identifying barriers to women’s leadership, the study hopes to identify steps unions can take to increase the proportion of women leaders. Some of these factors might apply to other underrepresented groups as well.

Theory:

- We takes an approach based on the work of Kurt Lewin. This model identifies forces that support women’s leadership and forces that restrain it. Lewin’s model suggests that greater change comes from removing restraining forces than from adding supportive ones.
- We use the following categories to organize the many factors related to gender and leadership: individual factors, personal factors outside of work, group factors, organizational factors, and societal or historical factors. We expect that key differences will be identified at the group level.

Methods:

- The study is based on interviews with participants in the Harvard Trade Union Program. Five women and five men participated in interviews that were approximately 60 to 90 minutes long. Some key characteristics of the respondents:
 - Positions they hold include staff representatives; media or communications staff at the state, provincial, or national level; elected officers (president or vice-president of large locals); or positions in the top tier of statewide leadership of their union
 - About half represent mostly public sector workers and half represent mostly private sector workers
 - Participants are from the U.S. and Canada
 - They range in age from 40 to 57
 - Three women are members of minority groups; the rest are white

Findings:

- *Individual level:* Both men and felt equally prepared for leadership positions.
- *Personal level:* Not surprisingly, child care and elder care required substantially more time commitment from women than men. Most of the women leaders were divorced or

never married; some reported their spouse was not supportive of their union role. Most of the male leaders were married and said their family life supported their union role.

- *Group level:* We found substantial differences between the experiences of women and men. All the men in the sample reported receiving considerable support from their immediate work group. They were trained and mentored, and they felt like they were working with a group of kindred spirits. In contrast, only one woman felt she was supported by her work group to this extent. The other women faced a mixture of support and hindrances, and sometimes dealt with outright hostility and sabotage from their peers. Women who said of their workgroup, “They leave me alone and let me do my job” considered this to be very supportive – even though our observation is that it was far less support than received by the male leaders.
- *Organizational level:* Generally, both men and women reported receiving support from the organizational level. However, some of the examples described by respondents as involving their immediate work group also dealt with organizational issues such as hiring and job assignments.
- *Societal level:* There was a lack of connection between the women’s movement and the labor movement. None of respondents mentioned the women’s movement as a factor that affected their leadership role. Instead, they focused on the factors that are key to any labor union: politics, the economy, and to a lesser extent, technological changes in how work is done.
- *Other key findings:*
 - Aspirations for higher union role: Four of the five men we interviewed aspire to a higher leadership position; One said he is being groomed for it and was told to “be ready.” The women have lower expectation – not necessarily because they don’t want a higher role, but because they are tired of fighting gender-based battles on a daily basis, and feel devalued by their peers. One woman who identified a higher position she aspires to, believe the union would have to “take a risk” to put her in that position – even though she has dedicated her entire career to the labor movement and has been very successful. Men had a higher expectation of being promoted.
 - Support for leadership aspirations: Most of the women said they had decided not to run for a position or apply for a position because of lack of support from leadership. None of the men reported having this experience.
- *Next steps:* We plan to conduct an internet-based survey of union leaders to collect quantitative, systematic data on this topic. This will enable us to make recommendations for change based on identifying the most common patterns. To do this, we hope to get some assistance from unions. Specifically, we need to send emails to union members with an invitation to take the survey and a clickable link to the survey itself.

INTRODUCTION

Why are there fewer women in leadership positions than expected, even today? While women have achieved much in last few decades, they still hold fewer leadership positions than men in labor unions, business, government, and nonprofit organizations (Eagly & Carli, 2007, Kaminski & Yakura, 2008) and still do not receive pay that is equal to that of men for the same work (Ricucci, 2008). This holds even after more than two generations (since the “second wave” of feminism began in the 1950s) of striving by highly talented, achievement-oriented women, and the passing of equal opportunity legislation in many of the developed nations to prevent such inequities. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) describe the situation as “no longer” what it was, when women focused their lives and identities on their caregiving and support of others. But it is “not yet” what women would hope to accomplish in an environment free from bias.

Researchers have identified many factors that contribute to this, including bias in hiring, and promotion practices (Komaki, 2007; Perry, David-Blake and Kulik, 1994) fewer opportunities for advancement and mentoring (Catalyst, 2009; 2004), and a perceived mismatch between the traits of a leader and the traits of women (Heilman, 2001; Schein, 2007). Yet, the field of leadership development lacks a model that enables us to integrate these various findings and provide comprehensive explanations for the present state of women’s union leadership.

To address this need, we propose a framework based on the work of Kurt Lewin (1947), who developed theories with the intent of improving social conditions and solving social conflict. His work on racism and religious intolerance provides some parallels to our focus on gender. Lewin uses the concept of a quasi-stationary equilibrium to describe the status quo. It is not completely static, but rather remains balanced between opposing forces. The key task in Lewin’s model is to identify the forces that maintain the situation in its current state. To do this, we need to identify both forces that support change in the direction of more advancement for women and forces that restrain women’s advancement. Many such forces have already been identified – but studies typically focus on a few of these at a time. Combining the various supports and hindrances into one model has at least two advantages. First, it provides a framework for understanding the lived experiences of women in unions. And second, combining them into one model allows for the integration of available findings in the leadership/career literature so that we begin to ask questions such as which forces are the most significant, and how can we change these forces to create labor organizations that are supportive of women and women’s leadership.

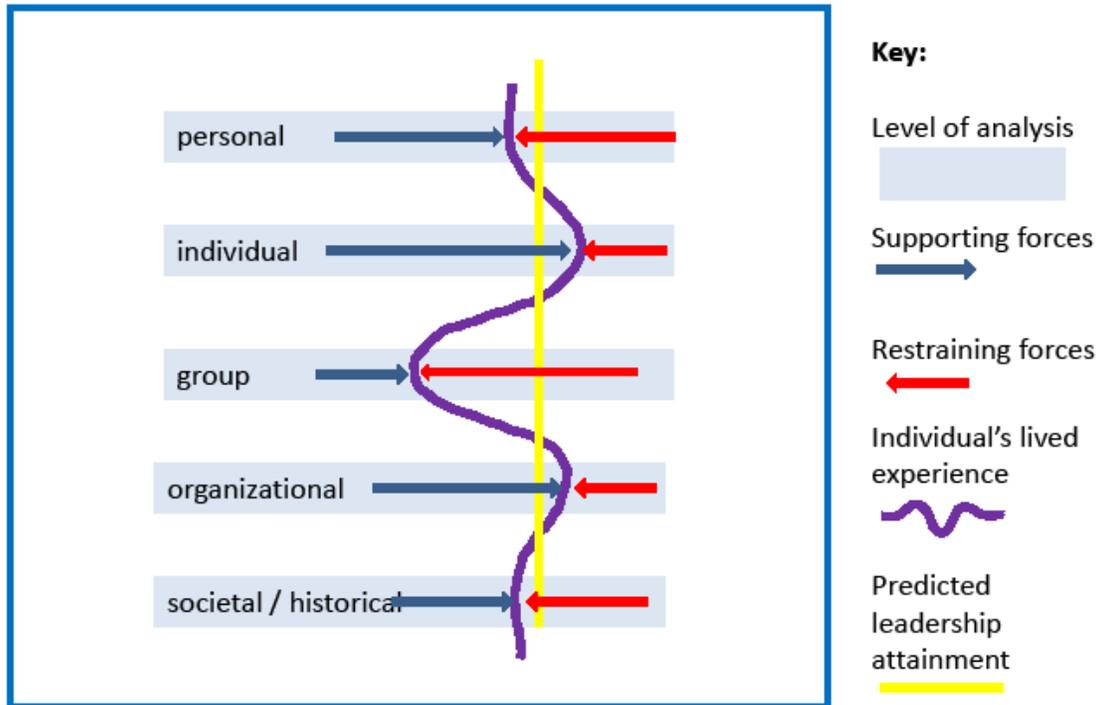
Lewin focuses attention on a field of analysis or environment in which the individual is situated. The status quo is determined by a set of supporting and restraining forces. A change in behavior is predicted by a change in the relative strength of the forces. In applying this approach to union women’s leadership, we seek to identify the forces that support and restrain women’s advancement in the union. Importantly, this approach implies that individuals’ achievement in their union career is a result not only of their own skills, expertise, and ambition, but also of the supporting and restraining forces in their fields of action. Thus, even highly talented and driven women may not achieve their leadership goals if they are working in an environment in which opposing forces are substantially greater than supporting ones.

Because there are such a large number of forces that are theoretically relevant to gender and leadership achievement, we organize them according to levels of analysis, specifically individual, personal (i.e., outside of the union or workplace, such as family life), group, organizational, and societal. Individual women may experience support at some levels and opposition at others. In addition, the sources of support and opposition may change over the course of a women’s career as a union leader. The framework we propose allows us to examine the complex mix of forces that women experience.

Figure 1 below illustrates how these forces might be arranged in the life of an individual women leader. Some forces may favor her achievement of career goals; other forces will hinder it. Each set of forces

could change over time. For example, it is common for female union members to be less active in the union while their children are young, and to become noticeably more active when their children have grown. At each level, the balance of forces could slide either towards or away from achievement.

Figure 1
Supporting and restraining forces affecting women’s union leadership



Based on Lewin’s approach, we predict that the array of restraining and supporting forces will be a better predictor of union leadership attainment than will individual skills and abilities. This model potentially applies to both men and women. However, we predict that there will be significantly more restraining forces for women than for men.

METHODS AND SAMPLE

We interviewed a sample of 10 of the 35 participants in the Harvard Trade Union Program. The program is a six-week, residential training program that focuses on the political, economic, and social forces affecting the labor movement. It also provides training on leadership and organizational change in unions. The interviews were conducted over the phone and tape-recorded for accuracy.

The interview respondents are from the U.S. and Canada. They are union officers and staff in a variety of industries; half represent mostly public sector employees and half represent mostly private sector workers. They hold a range of positions: three are union staff representatives or business agents; three hold positions in media, communications, or research at the state, provincial, or national level; two are

part-time elected officials (president or vice-president) in their local unions; and two are in leadership positions with significant supervisory and administrative responsibilities at the state or provincial level.

To learn about the range of experiences they have had over the course of their union careers, we asked each respondent to describe three different leadership positions: their current one, a leadership experience early in their union career or activism, and a middle leadership experience that occurred between the two.

Five of the respondents are women and five are men. Three, all women, are members of racial or ethnic minorities. They range in age from 40 to 57, with a mean age of 50. All have at least some college education, 80 percent have at least a bachelors degree and 30 percent have a graduate degree.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

We describe and analyze the results for the individual, personal, group, organizational, and societal levels of analysis. Then, we discuss outcomes, including support for or opposition to the respondents' advancement to higher leadership positions.

Individual level

Our primary question at this level is whether respondents believe they possess the skills needed to perform in their leadership positions. Respondents mentioned a variety of skills, including writing and oral communication skills, legal knowledge, bargaining experience, and experience working in political campaigns. Although they acknowledged the need for learning additional skills particularly when they were just starting out, most respondents, both women and men, reported that they had the skills they needed to perform their jobs. Therefore, at least in the eyes of the respondents, skill level is not a factor in the underrepresentation of women in union leadership and the associated devaluing of their contribution and performance.

Personal level

We asked respondents about factors in their personal lives that supported or hindered their union careers. Overall, the tone of the comments about personal factors was quite different for women and men. All of the men have children (or step-children) and all of the men have supportive spouses. For some, it is a second wife who is supportive, and time spent on union work was an issue in their first marriage. Some of the male union leaders mentioned the time spent raising children. One, in particular, spent time with his children and coached youth hockey, making it more difficult to devote time on union activities. Another describes his situation this way:

I've got a wonderful wife, she's extremely intelligent, career oriented. The kind of work I do requires a lot of time away. I'm away from home a lot. Union business is never done. I've never worked more weekends or nights in any job I've ever had. Having a supportive wife, somebody that, she can raise my son – I do miss a lot of things – but having her there is a key element.

Recently, his family experienced a significant change:

My wife lost her job. She works for a small university and got laid off. She's home full time now. That's been really a blessing. I was able, on a moment's notice, to walk off to [this training program] for six weeks. It's been extremely helpful. It was a blessing in disguise, really.

Noticeably, most of the women leaders in our sample were divorced or never married. When asked about support in their personal life, none of them mentioned a supportive spouse or partner during their early or

middle leadership experiences, although two did in their current position. One attributed a broken marriage and failed relationships, in part, to the amount of time she spent working for the union.

Women mentioned a number of supports, but overall, they reported noticeably more hindrances than men did. Two of the women have children and three do not. One woman who has children was not active in the union while her children were young. The other was sometimes able to bring the children to her union activities. A third woman felt especially strongly about this issue, and spoke in response to some comments by male union leaders at the training program:

For men to sit there and say ‘we have a democratically elected leadership, and so there are no barriers to women in our union’ just astounds me. Just to go to a union meeting a rank and file woman member has to pick the kids up from child care – if they’re lucky enough to have child care – rush home, do grocery shopping, cook the meal, clean up, serve the meal, clean up, put the kids to bed. We know that women still do the bulk of the domestic work and are still the nurturers in the family. So for women just to attend a union meeting and be elected shop stewards is a challenge. Not to mention the incredible guilt trip they feel when they do take on another volunteer capacity, like being a steward. And that’s the start of your union career.

Our union has been at the forefront of addressing barriers facing women and women’s full participation in the union. And we’ve brought in a lot of policies. But all the policies in the world aren’t going to change the systemic attitudes towards women and the clear definition of roles between men and women in the family, in the workplace, and in community. And until we break that down, women aren’t going to have full participation.

In summary, men described their personal lives as largely supportive of their union careers but the women tended to feel less supported by their spouses or partners and families. The problem of a structural lag is clear. Our view is that while there is a very real difference in the family responsibilities born by women and men that does affect their availability for union work, personal factors constitute only part of the picture. In our sample, several of the women in our study did not have children or spouses. Yet, as we will describe later, there were still gender-based limits on their union careers.

Group level

We asked participants to identify the group they worked with most closely (i.e., those they interacted with on a daily or weekly basis). Because the interaction with group members is frequent, there are several opportunities for leaders to experience support, hindrance, or both.

When asked for examples of the kinds of support they received from their immediate work group, men identified being mentored, being trained by a staff representative (i.e., “he taught me the grievance and arbitration process”), and working with “kindred souls”, or a group of people who share a common direction. Another said that the president and vice-president at the international level of his union “come to me directly, engage me, and ask me my thoughts.” A third said

The leadership group is open to discourse and new ideas. In terms of the president, we have a high mutual respect for one another. He may not always agree with you but he respects that advice, and likewise.

All of the men reported feeling supported to a significant degree, although some also reported hindrances, described below.

Women respondents also described some support. One said she was mentored, and “praised in public”. Her director provided strategic career advice, leading to her taking a key temporary assignment. This respondent was the only woman who received extensive support.

Other women did receive support to varying degrees. One said a staff representative steered her to a scholarship that would enable her to return to school. But the remaining three women described the support they received in more modest terms, such as “they left me alone and didn’t micro-manage me.” While being left alone is certainly better than being hindered, it is not the type of support that helps someone advance to a higher leadership position. Another woman was more forthcoming. When asked, “In what ways does your work group support you in your career,” she burst out laughing, suggesting that her group was anything but supportive.

We also asked respondents if their group hindered them in their union career. Men reported some hindrances. One who received a promotion to a position with supervisory responsibilities said

When I got that position, there had been a staff representative of long standing who was also in line for that promotion, and I was promoted on top of that person. So, when I entered [that] position, there was staff animosity, and I had, in quick succession, three turnovers – one who didn’t get the promotion and two people who I felt were not adding to their professional growth in the way that needed to be done.

In this case, because the respondent had the support of the president, he won this battle.

Other men described conflicts that were either about issues the union was involved in, with one side supporting a campaign and the other opposing it. These were generally not seen as obstacles directed at them personally. However, the hindrances faced by women in the group setting were more often experienced as attempts to attack or harm the individual (We cannot say if they were intended that way). Here are some examples.

While she was a local officer, one respondent decided to return to school. As mentioned above, her staff representative helped her find a scholarship but her group put obstacles in her path:

At one point I had lost my position as chairperson, and the guys that got [elected] tried to stop me from going to the Meany Center, tried to use the staff rep[resentative], who they were friends with, [to do this]. But I called down to the international and had the Vice-President get ahold of the international President and they said the scholarship money is yours whether you’re in office or not. Then a different group got elected.... they tried to get me off the [international union] Women’s Advisory Committee... and the international totally supported me... And then the local guys... went to the employer and tried to get him to not even let me have my vacation time ... so that I couldn’t go to [school]. The staff rep[resentative] had to go straighten that out. He got direction from above to handle that.

Noticeably, this respondent received more support from the organizational level (international union) than the group level (peers at the local union level).

Another woman described a complex mix of support and hindrance. She had just moved into a leadership position in a male-dominated building trade:

They made sure to check in frequently. I would get calls from the [staff] representative, just to touch base that I was doing well in the facility, because of the climate at that time

with the merger. I was the only female in [that position], and they kept a “big brotherly” eye out for me... [But] when it came to comparing me to the others, I was always a step-child. They were supportive, but I also knew where my place was in the group, which was, I was still a female, and they, at times, let it be known. I was getting mixed signals all the time

I was promoted to [another position]. Actually, it was kind of bizarre. I was at work one day, and I got a call from my district representative from the union and he said “I want to congratulate you, you’ve been promoted to [a new position] over both facilities.” I used an expletive and told him, “No. No.” because I knew it was going from the frying pan into the fire. [I hadn’t even applied for this position.]

After a time, there were massive budget cuts, and I had to do the new position and the old one, and I had half the staff. There was a period of about five years in which it was horrible.

It started out [with them supporting me], but half way through it got ugly. They started isolating me by not giving me information, [such as] when certain meetings were occurring, when there were questions about how my staff was handling the work, how money flowed for training, how much control of the budget, They always raised the bar called “this is where you need to be.” I always got to the goal, but it didn’t seem that I could ever get past it, because they would then change the rules. And I noticed that this was only happening within my world. In the [facility] as a whole, I was getting a lot of commendations. I was getting a lot of awards. I never had my department get a black eye for not meeting regulatory requirements, which was not the case with the people that I worked with. I almost felt that they work at 60 percent, but I always had to be 200 percent.

[I had a male peer in the same position.] They did not raise the bar for him. And we [were] very congenial. We were friends. We would at times get together away from work. [But] during work, he made sure to stay clear of me. He was cordial, but if I needed someone to support a position or to help me with something, he wasn’t asked to do that, because the people above me were the same people that were above him.

Toward the end of my career with [that facility], even though I got support, when it came right down to it, I do not believe that, [given] my tenure, my experience, and what I accomplished, that they supported me to the level that was fair.

This respondent’s experience captures many of the challenges that women leaders face. Sometimes support is offered in ways that are simultaneously de-valuing, but it may also be the only support that is available. One hindrance can be overcome, only to be replaced by another. And too often, the peers and supervisors who claim to be supportive are the ones who put the obstacles in place. It is a double-bind, in which the same group – and in some cases the same individual – publicly offers support yet openly behaves in ways that are a hindrance. Clearly not all women leaders face these kinds of situations. But far too many of them do.

In contrast, none of the men described this type of experience. They sometimes described conflicts with other men in which battle lines were clearly drawn, and everyone knew who was on which side. But many women leaders face situations in which those who purport to be on their side are simultaneously sabotaging and undermining them.

As we mentioned above, by the very nature of the group level, there are many opportunities for both support and hindrance of union leaders. But the long-term pattern of both support and hindrance coming from the same people seems to be a distinctive experience for women leaders. Male leaders certainly face hindrances, but generally not from the same people who are supporting them.

Organizational level

Most participants said they received resources and general support and recognition from the organizational level. There were a few exceptions. The home union of one male respondent had been merged into a larger union and was now a division of the larger union. He felt that he continued to get support from the division, but not from the top level of the new union. Another male respondent, who was a regional director at the time, described in being stuck in the middle: being pressured from higher up in the organization to get things done, and facing resistance from the membership to taking on new tasks. Another indicated that the higher organization was unwilling to devote resources to his group during an organizing drive because the unit was so small. All of these are leadership challenges that appear to be independent of gender.

The women in the sample tended to describe the higher levels of the organization as supportive. In the example above in which one respondent's local-level peers were trying to cancel her scholarship, she received firm backing from the top level of the union. She credits the AFL-CIO and her international union as making strong efforts to increase diversity in their leadership, and reported that it helped her considerably. She was given training opportunities and recognition via the international union's women's committee as well as with CLUW (Coalition of Labor Union Women). Many unions offer these kinds of targeted opportunities that help women increase their skills and become more visible. Unfortunately, these opportunities do not necessarily provide increased power within a woman's home local. In this particular case, it helped the woman gain visibility and learn new skills, but she continued to face opposition at the local level. Her most significant step up in leadership came by moving into a staff representative position at a different union.

But on the whole, the organizational level was seen as relatively supportive by most of the respondents, both male and female. Some of the union had structural factors in place that provided more opportunities for women.

Societal level

We asked participants to identify larger factors in society that either supported or hindered their union work. Although this question, like the others, was open-ended, there was a striking uniformity in responses. Specifically, although our prompts in the question included changes in laws, other social movements, new ideas, or new technology, our respondents overwhelmingly focused on two factors we had not suggested: politics and the economy. They cited U.S. presidents, Congressional leaders, and governors who were more or less favorable to the labor movement. One respondent said of the current situation, "they're trying to do everything they can to kill [the labor movement]", and cited economic conditions, outsourcing, the decline of the auto industry, Right-to-Work legislation, and the political threat to public sector bargaining rights. There were no noticeable gender differences in response to this question.

None of the respondents mentioned the women's movement as a factor that supported or hindered their work. This was the case even for one female respondent who mentioned a fairly traditional feminist issue: returning to work after maternity leave. She did not even consider contacting a women's group about this.

Although there obviously are larger societal factors that influence leadership pattern, these were generally not mentioned by our respondents. The only exception was the woman who identified child care and

family responsibilities as a system issue. Perhaps the societal level factors are like the air we breathe or the water fish swim in – it’s hard to see how it could be different.

Outcomes

What was the result of these leadership experiences? For each past leadership experience, we asked how it came to an end. For the current position, we asked about their aspirations for their next career move.

Four of the five men aspired to a higher position, and one said he is happy to stay in his current position. When asked what it would take to move into a higher position, one male leader said he was being groomed to move up to a very significant position and was told to “be ready.” Others also aspired to positions that would involve significant changes in status: a part-time, unpaid local officer would like to become full-time staff. Another in the top tier of leadership in a statewide organization hopes to move into the top position. In our sample, men said they moved up in six out of eight leadership positions, and stayed in the same position in two cases. Some of them moved up rapidly. One moved from grievance chair to president about six months after winning a key arbitration case.

For the women, their current aspirations are dramatically different. Two of the women are thinking of retiring in five to 10 years, and one hopes to be re-elected to the same position. One suggests a modest increase that would keep her at the same level in the organizational structure. Only one is hoping for a significant promotion, but she stresses that she is happy to stay where she is if it doesn’t work out.

These leadership outcomes raise some key issues. Some authors suggest that women hold fewer top leadership positions because they are not as ambitious, not willing to work as hard, or because they have children. We found a different story. The women leaders in our sample all have had ambitions, they all worked hard, and only one took time out because of children. These women leaders have, at time, felt devalued by their work groups and their organization. Their responses included comments like these: “I got tired of the fight, tired of being seen as incompetent,” or “It’s hard not to lose faith” that they will be recognized or promoted. One woman simply does not see any possibility for someone to move up from her current position, given the structure of her organization.

In one of the more dramatic examples, one woman reported leading a key campaign, sacrificing a great deal for the union, but was still not rewarded for the leadership she exercised.

The time when I demonstrated the most leadership was when we were under brutal attack by the government, and I really stepped up to the plate. We launched a fight-back campaign. That became personal for me. I was driven, to the detriment of my health. There was a period of time for a year, when I was coming in to work at about five o’clock in the morning and not leaving until ten or eleven at night. I probably lost about 30 pounds. It forced everybody else to step up their game as well... We really, really made an impact. While we were not able to stave off all of the attacks by the government on our membership, we were certainly able to mount an effective opposition. I take a lot of pride and credit for that... There was an incredible groundswell of opposition to what the government was doing. And so this was the birth of a number of coalitions and advocacy groups and ordinary people who were rising up and saying “enough”.

We asked if this experience positioned her for a promotion. She said, “No. It was still a number of years after that when I was promoted into another position.” Among the women in our sample, this respondent reported receiving the most consistent support from her union and her work group. Yet, when asked what it would take for her to move up, her response suggested that it would involve some risk for the leadership to promote her, because she does not fit the traditional mold of a union leader.

It's going to take... some will on the part of the leadership to take a chance on somebody who has been around for a long time and really put their whole life into this organization and some recognition.

We asked why it would be “taking a chance,” given her long commitment to the union and her demonstrated success. She said,

I'm not your stereotypical trade unionist. I'm not loud and aggressive and blustery. I have a different style; I'm thoughtful and a thinker, and more reserved, and more strategic, and quiet. So that would be going against the norm. To be seen as a director, you have to be a bit of a hard ass. They have reservations about me, about whether I have what it takes to do that. My response to that is that you don't have to all have the same style of leadership. It's good to have a mix. The old style of trade unionist has gone by the wayside. Just as much as the negotiators don't sit across the table and swear and pound the table anymore or do fistfights out in the hall, neither do senior staff have to be mean and cruel and hard and emotionless. So in that respect, it would be taking a chance. But acknowledging that people bring different strengths to the table and that there is value in having a mix of leadership style.

Finally, we asked respondents if that had ever run or office or applied for a position because of the support they received from union leadership. Three of three men but only three of five women said they had. We also asked if they had ever decided *not* to run for office or apply for a position because of lack of support from leadership. Three of three men said “no.” In contrast, three of five women said “yes.” One of them said she had considered applying for a position in the education department. At the time, she worked in communications. The leader implied that she had no experiences in education. However, she ran workshops for union activists as part of her communications job on a regular basis.

All the participants in the sample have worked hard, demonstrated leadership, and accomplished goals for their unions. For the men, this was generally associated with being recognized and moving up in leadership. For the women, that was only sometimes the case. And in a few cases, the more leadership the woman demonstrated, the more likely she was to be attacked by peers or by leaders above her. It is perhaps a move of self-preservation for women to temper their ambitions in such settings. Notably, two women in the sample who had backgrounds in other types of organizations – the military and corporate management – both said it was more difficult for women to advance in leadership in the union than in the other type of organization.

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

These data generally support the idea that there is value in understanding how each level of analysis affects individual women as they take on leadership roles. All of the women faced gender-related challenges to their leadership, but the challenges came from different sources and/or via different mechanisms. The results also raise questions for further research. One question is the relative importance of a particular support or barrier within each level. Using a group level example, does the positive impact of mentoring outweigh the negative impact on women's achievement of peers' subtle resistance to diversity behaviors? Does the mentor's higher status change the group resistance? Should the mentor and/or other leaders respond to the resistance, if so how? A second key question is which level of factors is most important? In our interviews, respondents had the strongest responses to issues at the personal and group level, and were more confident about individual and organizational level factors.

These data can also be used to suggest a number of strategies that enhance gender diversity in union leadership. First, unions and employers can work to create an effective balance between work and family,

for both men and women, in ways that are structurally supported by society. Second, unions can create and implement mechanisms to increase fairness in evaluation and promotion. Third, unions and other organizations can assess resistance to diversity and create a plan to decrease it. These are obviously large changes. And they will likely take a long time to create.

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